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*Person O File*

28 September 1967

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: General Westmoreland's EYES ONLY Message

1. General Westmoreland says that we are paying a high price to maintain our present positions near the DMZ and that we are unable to relieve the enemy's pressure. He says major offensive operations are not feasible until the dry season (May or June), but he does not rule out smaller scale raids into the north if they receive political approval.

2. As a consequence, General Westmoreland plans to "thin out" our positions near the DMZ. He has abandoned DYEMARKER for the time being, using the barrier resources instead to harden our positions along Route 9 to the south. Those positions are being reinforced with two ARVN Airborne battalions. III MAF is to reinforce the area between Route 9 and Danang. Westmoreland is considering further deployments which would thin out our forces somewhat in II Corps to enable the Marines to shift additional forces northward from Danang. He will rely on intensified artillery and air strikes to inflict heavy losses on the enemy in the DMZ area.

3. COMMENT: The adjustments undertaken and proposed by General Westmoreland -- however justified for climatic and geographic considerations -- will be widely interpreted as a net setback to our military position. The Communists will claim a military victory, and their forces in South Vietnam will be encouraged. Our own forces -- and more significantly, those of our Vietnamese allies -- will be discouraged at the seeming impotence of our military position. Critics of our position here at home will have a field day.

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4. The only alternative to the proposed limited withdrawal would be to stay in place and trust that the cumulative effect of the rainy season and our counterfire will reduce the enemy's ability to inflict a high level of attrition on our forces. We would recommend that a comprehensive reading on this cyclical pattern of enemy operations be made after the Route 9 defenses have been strengthened, and before any final decision is taken to withdraw from positions near the DMZ.

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Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

September 27, 1967

FOR: The Honorable  
Richard Helms  
Director, CIA

FROM: Benjamin H. Read  
Executive Secretary

Nick Katzenbach intends to discuss  
this at the Non-Group meeting  
tomorrow.